

COVID-19 public 'test and adjust' survey report

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Executive summary

NHS Blackpool and NHS Fylde and Wyre Clinical Commissioning Groups (the Fylde Coast CCGs) are committed to listening to patients and members of the public to make sure their views and experiences inform quality improvements and commissioning intentions. Despite the enduring COVID-19 pandemic, this commitment remains.

Towards the end of May 2020, the CCGs sought the views of people living on the Fylde Coast to understand how well informed they had felt in relation to the pandemic so far, their experiences of accessing local health services, and how they were coping during these unprecedented times.

An online survey was carried out between 26 May and 4 June and received a total of 776 responses. More than 80 per cent of respondents were over the age of 40 and just 20 per cent were men. There were a higher number of respondents from the Thornton-Cleveleys, Poulton and Lytham and St Annes areas. Around 20 per cent of respondents described themselves as having a disability.

Key findings

Communication and messaging

A huge majority of the respondents, more than 90 per cent, said:

- They were getting the information they needed to keep safe during this crisis.
- They were clear on what they needed to do if they experienced symptoms of COVID-19.
- They understood the government's advice about social distancing.

When asked what information was missing, a small number of people (less than two percent) felt the information they had been receiving was confusing and contradictory, with more clarity needed. A small number of people also felt information around shielding could have been clearer and more timely/frequent.

People said they mainly accessed their information from national TV/radio, TV news broadcasts and government updates, local NHS websites and Facebook.

Accessing health services

Ninety-five per cent of respondents said they knew who to contact for urgent or emergency issues which weren't related to COVID-19.

Less than half (45 per cent) of those asked said they had accessed local health services since 18 March 2020. Of those who had accessed services:

- Nearly 60 per cent said they had spoken to their GP over the phone.
- Nearly half had seen a pharmacist face to face.
- Just four per cent said they had accessed a virtual (e.g. video call) appointment with their practice.

Almost 80 per cent of people who rated their experience said that they were satisfied with the service they had received.

Worryingly, more than half of the respondents said they wouldn't seek healthcare support at this time because of concerns about catching COVID-19 or not wanting to burden the NHS.

How people are coping

Reassuringly, more than 85 per cent of people said they were coping at least fairly well. However, the remainder said they were having some difficulty with coping, or not coping well at all.

For those who weren't coping so well, when asked what would help them cope better people cited the following:

- A better government response, clear and consistent government advice.
- People following the guidance and adhering to restrictions.
- Seeing family and friends.

Community support

Thirty-eight per cent of people who said they have wanted to connect to local community support (220) haven't been able to do so.

When asked to make further comments on accessing community support, around 16 per cent of those who commented said there was a lack of information about community support, particularly for those who don't access the internet. Around six per cent said they weren't considered vulnerable so help hadn't been offered, but they felt like they may have benefitted from help.

Encouragingly around 40 per cent of those who responded reported that they were satisfied with the community support they had received.

Overall qualitative data analysis

While the majority of people are getting the information they need and are coping fairly well during the pandemic a number of strong themes came out of the qualitative data:

- Clear and consistent messaging is important.
- People are generally very satisfied with the level of service they have received from the local NHS.
- There is a level of dissatisfaction with the government's handling of the pandemic.
- Local information and data is important to people.
- People have concerns about others not following the guidelines and adhering to restrictions.
- People who are shielding feel a like the 'forgotten' group.
- Mental health will be more important than ever in the coming months.
- People are hugely grateful for the hard work and dedication of NHS staff on the Fylde Coast.

Recommendations

In response to the feedback gathered through the survey a number of recommendations have been identified and a full action plan will be developed.

- Ensure communications are clear, consistent and accessible.
- Continue to push the message that the NHS is 'open for business' – people should understand they *can* get help for non-COVID-19 related illnesses.
- Focus on the CCGs website as a trusted source of information – ensuring content is accessible, relevant and accurate at all times.
- Continue to grow and develop the CCGs' social media channels as a trusted source of information for local people.
- A sustained focus on mental health support – promoting how and where people can access mental health and wellbeing services, support, advice and guidance.
- A greater focus on community support – what support is available and how people can access that support.
- Recognise the importance people place on receiving local information/data during a time of crisis and understand how this can be best shared in the future.
- Look at ways to expand the dissemination of information outside of digital/social media, for example posters in supermarkets – utilise volunteers/other agencies.
- Repeat the survey at a later stage with a concerted effort to obtain a more even geographical spread of respondents and also ensuring other opportunities to complete it are available (i.e. not just online).
- The greater numbers of respondents from the Fylde and Wyre area is possibly a legacy of previous, greater engagement work across these areas compared to Blackpool. As such, a greater focus should be made towards engaging residents of Blackpool in the future.

Methodology

From the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic it was clear that reliable, appropriate and timely information would be a crucial element in helping to effectively manage the crisis and keep members of the public and health and care staff safe and well. Not only in relation to advice and guidance specifically about COVID-19, but also accessing health services for non-COVID-19 related issues.

In order to try and evaluate the Fylde Coast CCGs' communications approach to date, in turn informing the activity going forward, an online survey was carried out by the communications and engagement department. The survey was designed to understand:

- Whether people were getting the information they needed and how they accessed it.
- Whether people know what to do if they have symptoms of COVID-19 or, indeed, health issues that aren't related to COVID-19.
- What their recent experiences of accessing local healthcare were like.
- Whether anything would stop them from seeking healthcare at this time.
- How people were coping and whether or not they have needed to access community support.

The survey questions were drawn up based on soft intelligence received during the pandemic so far, as well as insight from other patient and public surveys, including NHS England and Improvement and the clinical commissioning groups in Sussex. The survey also included equality monitoring questions.

The survey was live from 26 May – 4 June 2020 and was publicised through:

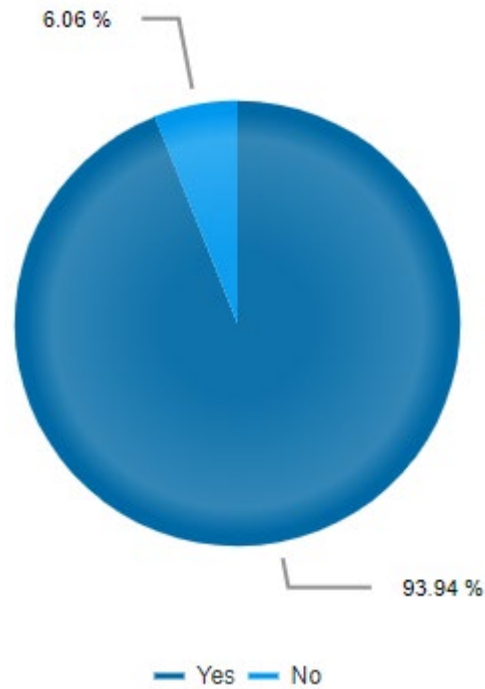
- The CCGs' Influence Membership scheme
- The CCGs' staff newsletter*
- Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust's internal communications channels*
- Blackpool Council's internal communications channels*
- Healthwatch
- Patient participation group representatives
- Patient Public and Engagement Forum
- CCGs' and Trust social media – Facebook, Twitter and Instagram
- GP practice social media

A request was made to both Fylde Council and Wyre Council to share the survey via their internal communications channels, however no confirmation that this had taken place was received.

*When the survey was shared internally with staff it was made clear that this survey was to be filled in from a personal perspective as somebody who lived on the Fylde Coast, NOT as a member of staff.

Data analysis

1. Are you getting the information you need about keeping safe during the crisis?

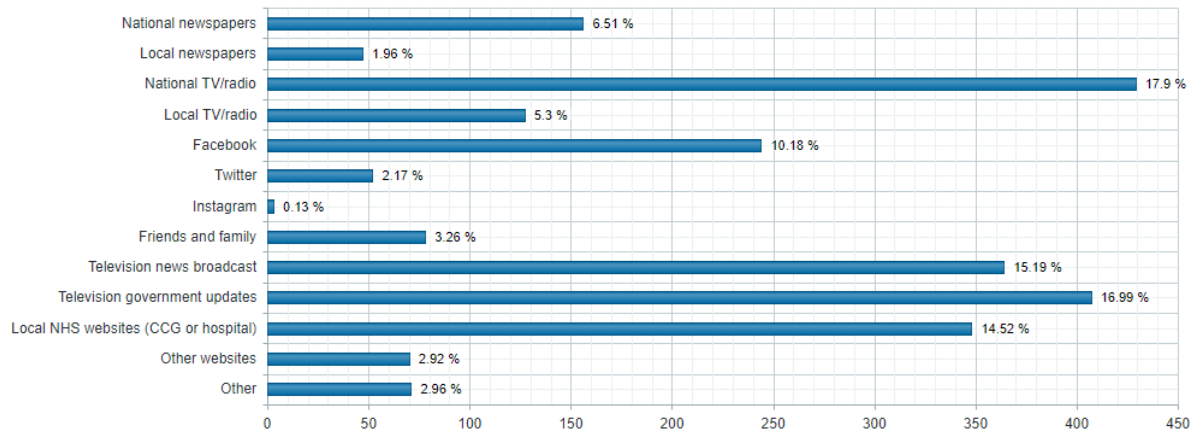


Those who answered 'no' were asked: what information are you missing, what else do you need?

Number of free text comments: 44

Theme	Number of comments
Confusing/contradictory messages – more clarity needed	14
Shielding information	11
Localised COVID figures/R rate	7
More information	2
Miscellaneous	10

2. Where do you mainly access your information?

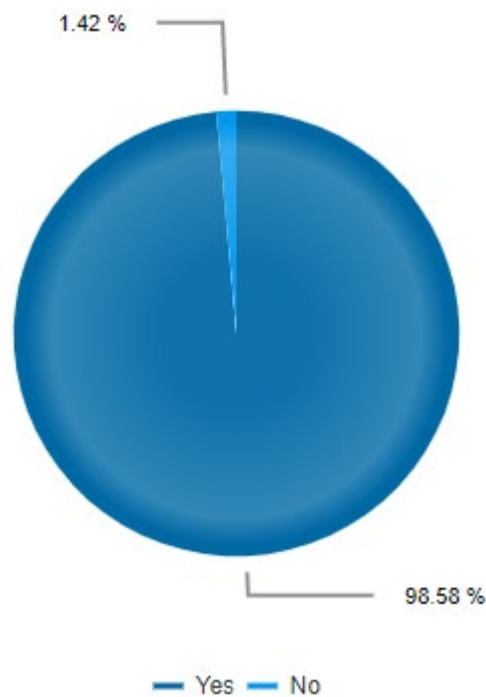


Those who answered 'other' were asked to expand on their answer.

Number of free text comments: 71

Theme	Number of comments
Digital – websites, apps, text messages	40
Work	17
Health setting – GP practice, hospital	6
Friends/family	3
Miscellaneous	5

3. Are you clear on what to do if you experience symptoms of COVID-19?

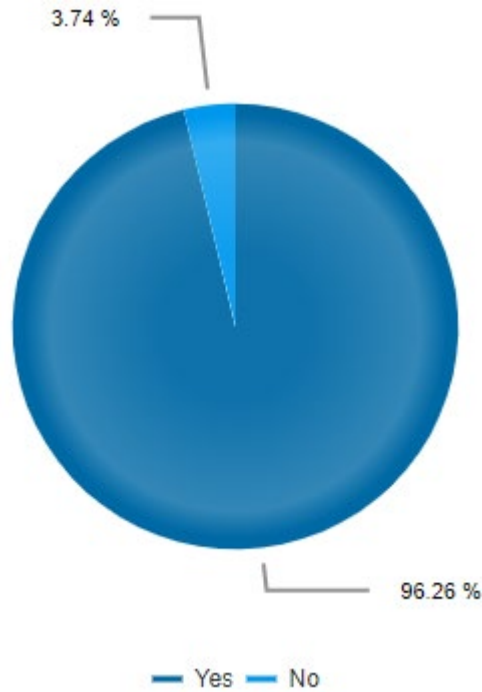


If the respondent answered 'no', they were asked: what is not clear?

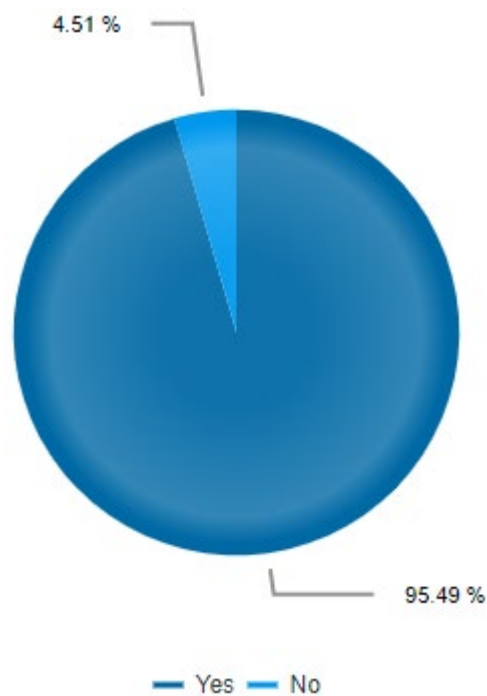
Number of free text comments: 9

Theme	Number of comments
Everything/what I should do	5
Miscellaneous	4

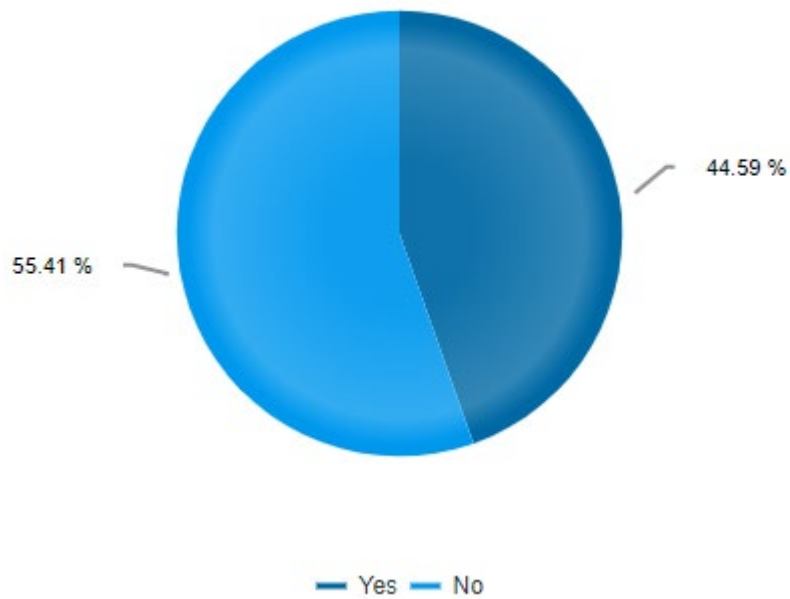
4. Do you understand the Government's advice about social distancing?



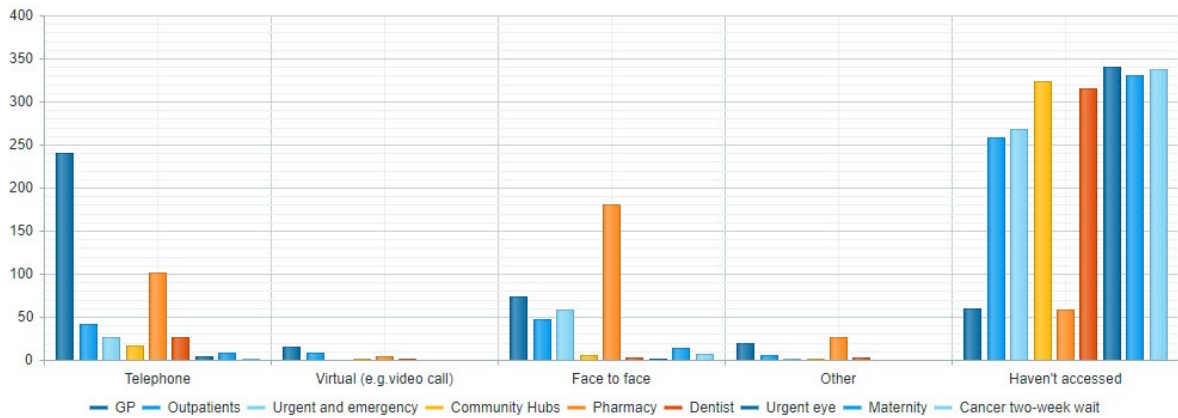
5. Do you know who to contact for any urgent or emergency health issues which are not COVID-19 related?



6. Have you accessed any local services during the pandemic (this would be services accessed between 18 March 2020 and present)?



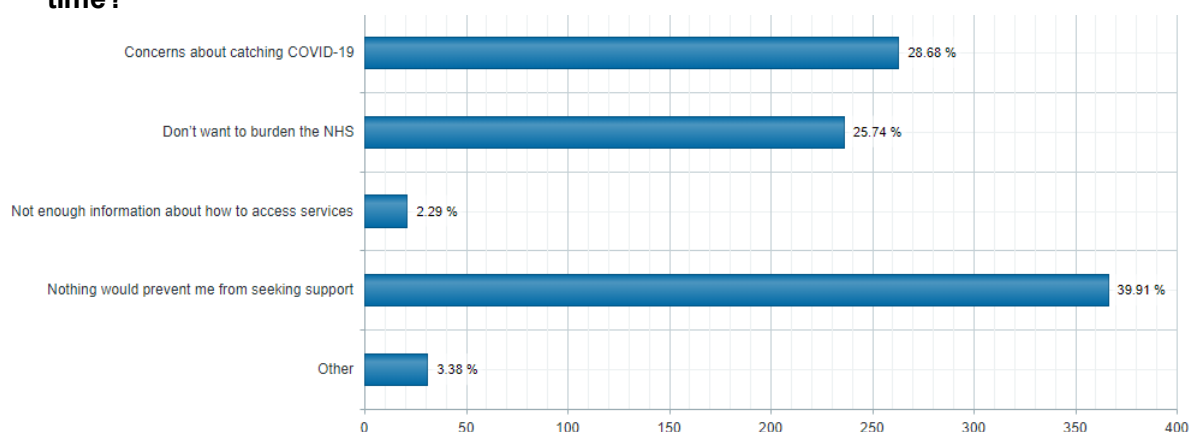
Which services have you accessed and how?



How was your experience?

Number of free text comments: 327	
Theme	Number of comments
Satisfied with the service	260
Reported both positive and negative experiences	40
Dissatisfied with the service	24
Miscellaneous	3

7. What, if anything, would prevent you from seeking healthcare support at this time?

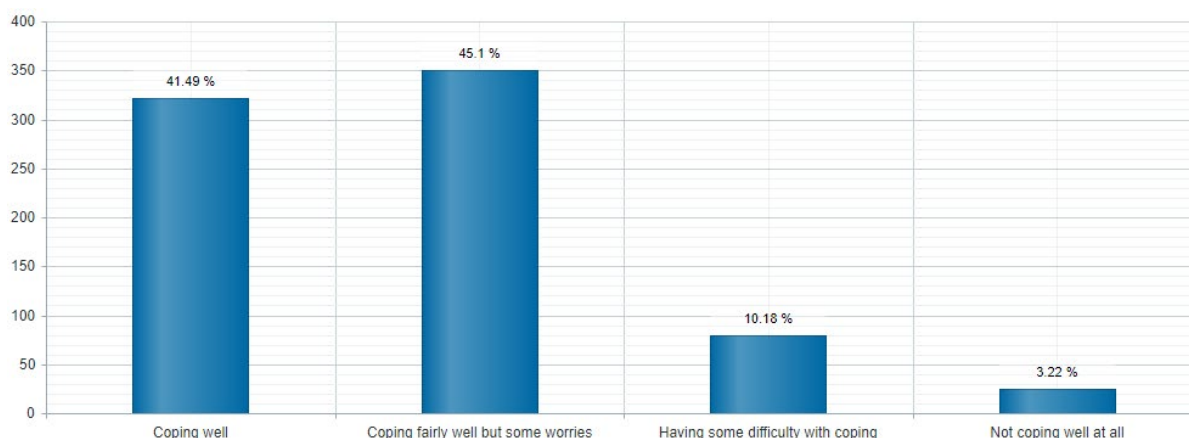


Those who answered 'other' were asked to expand on their answer.

Number of free text comments: 30

Theme	Number of comments
Not aware of services that are still running	7
Fear of COVID-19	5
Cancellation of appointment	4
Can't get through to GP	4
Dentist closed	3
Miscellaneous	7

8. How do you feel you are coping with the crisis currently?



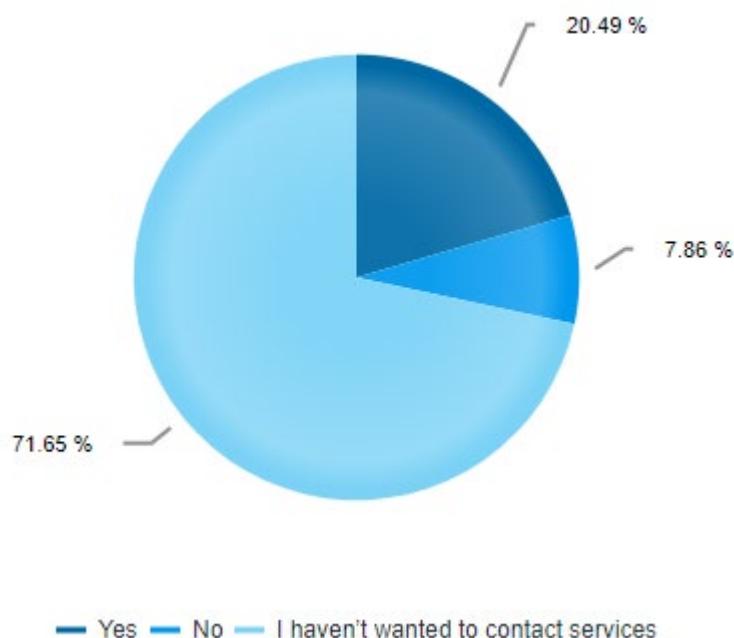
What would help you cope better at the moment?

Number of free text comments: 349

Theme	Number of comments
A better government response, clear and consistent government advice	40
Coping fine	40
People following guidelines	36
Seeing family/friends	28

Be able to access routine/non-COVID services more easily	23
Local coronavirus information/data	22
Mental health – COVID has impacted on mental health and more support is/will be needed	18
More support:	18
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From/at work • Dealing with existing conditions • Other 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7 • 5 • 6
Better testing/availability of a vaccine	18
Returning to normality	16
Clear and concise information	13
Local lockdown/stop people coming in from out of the area	12
More information and support for people who are shielding	11
Nothing	10
More information support for high risk people/elderly/vulnerable/additional needs	8
Understanding what the future looks like	4
Miscellaneous	32

9. If you have wanted to, have you been able to connect to local community support?



Any further comments on accessing local community support?

Number of free text comments: 124

Theme	Number of comments
Reported satisfaction in relation to community support	51
Lack of information	21
I know support is available	15
Not considered vulnerable so no help offered	8
Dissatisfied – support lacking or not come soon enough	7
Supported by neighbours/family/friends	2

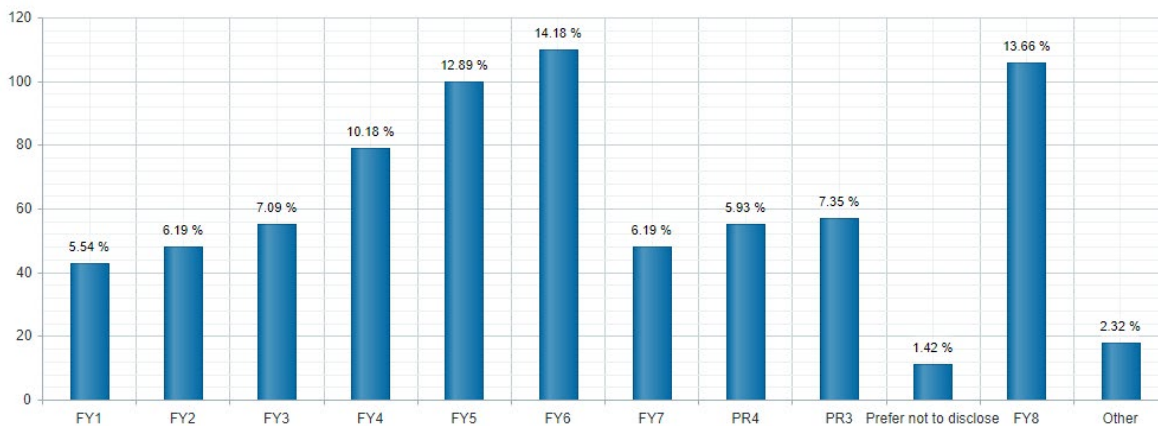
Haven't needed to access support	2
Miscellaneous	18

10. Do you have any further comments?

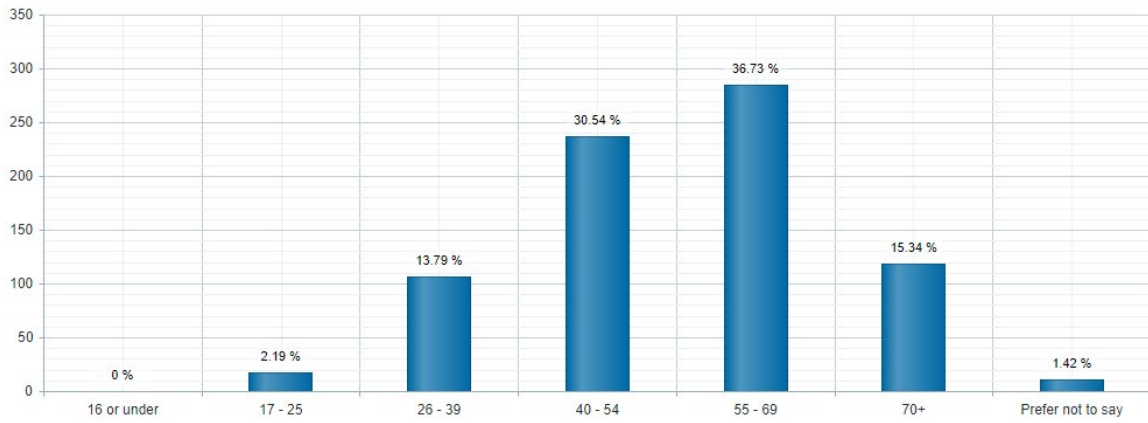
Number of free text comments: 180	
Theme	Number of comments
Appreciation for the NHS – a thank you	30
Satisfaction with local NHS services – primary and secondary care	25
Concerns about people not following guidelines	14
Dissatisfaction towards the government response/handling	10
Routine services need to return - non-COVID-19 illnesses still need to be treated	9
Satisfaction with local NHS comms	9
Dissatisfaction with local NHS services	9
More support and information needed for people who are shielding	9
Local information/data is useful	7
Satisfaction with community services/support	6
No extra help because not classed as extremely vulnerable	4
Dental services should be available	4
Testing/vaccine	4
Should have a local lockdown/response	3
Prevention – messages about how to stay well	2
Miscellaneous	35

Equality monitoring

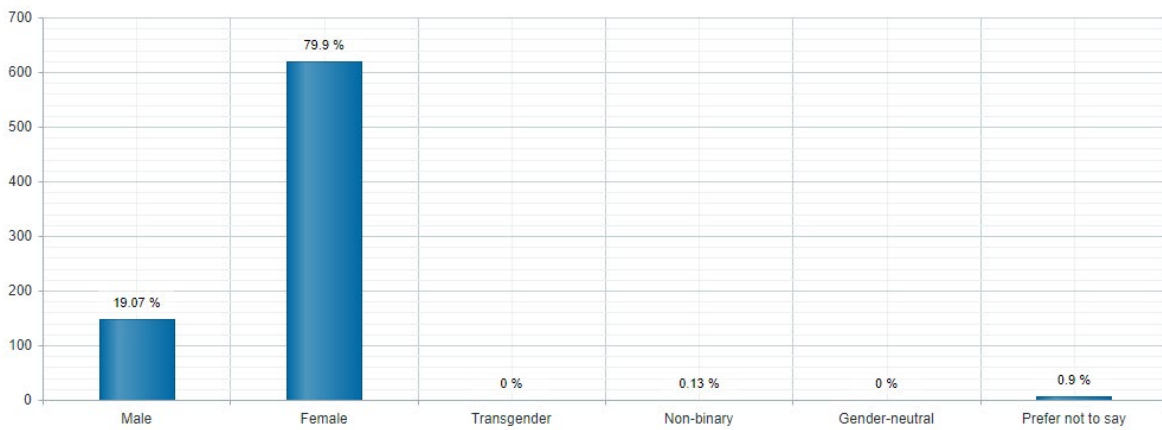
Postcode area



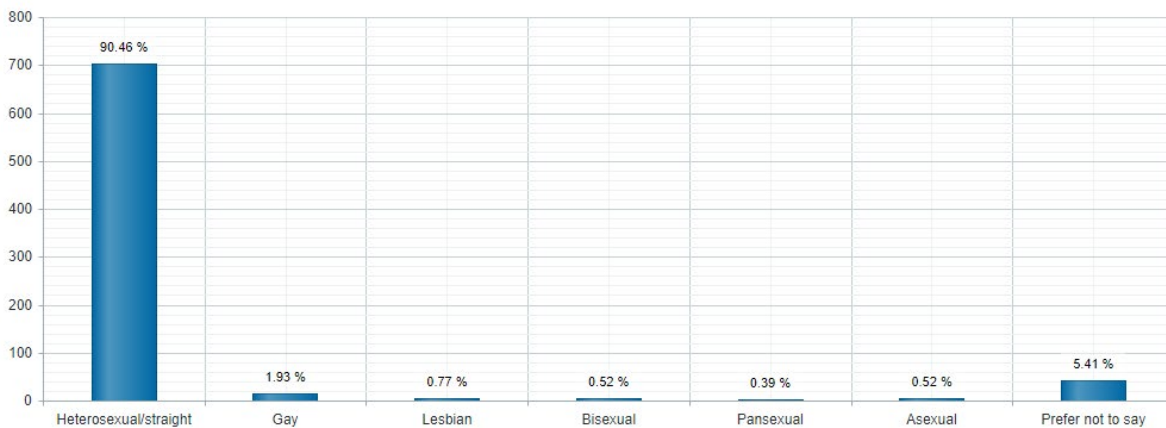
How old are you?



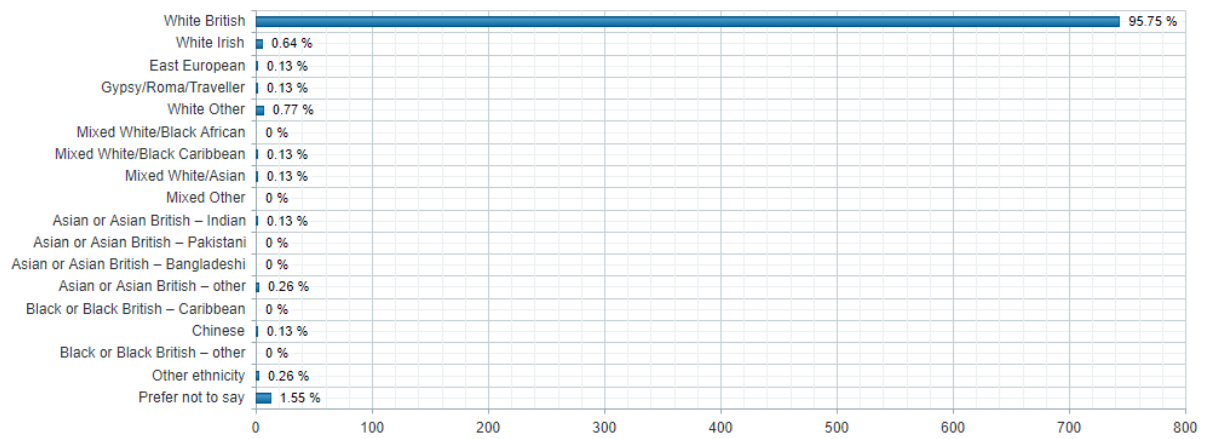
How would you describe yourself?



How would you best describe your sexual orientation?



How would you best describe your ethnic background?



Would you consider yourself to have a disability?

